

TRAINING CHILDREN. CONFERENCE IN READING PRINCIPALS WELCOME.

The fifteenth annual conference of the Parents' National Educational Union was opened on Monday afternoon at University College, Reading. The local branch has as its president the principal of the college (Mr. W. M. Childs, M.A.), and there is a numerous and representative body of vice-presidents; and for the purpose of the conference the following committees were formed:—General Committee, Mr. F. H. Wright, M.A. (chairman), Mrs. Abram, Mr. Hart, Mrs. Gilford, F.R.C.S., Mrs. Harrison Jones, Dryland Haslam, Mrs. Harrison Jones, Dryland Haslam, Mrs. Herbert Kingham, Mr. Dryland Haslam, jun., F.S.I., hon. secretary, Mrs. Miss Owen, B.Sc., Mr. A. W. Seamus, Miss Stevenson, Mr. J. C. Thorpe, M.A., F.I.C., and Mr. Frank Winter, Hospitality Committee, Mrs. M. A. Childs, B.Sc., Mrs. Dryland Haslam, Mrs. Herbert Kingham (hon. secretary), Mrs. Harrison Jones, and Mr. F. H. Wright. Committee for Nature Study Exhibition: Mrs. Harrison Jones (chairman), Mrs. Black, Miss Burgess, Mrs. R. Wallis (hon. secretary), Mr. J. L. Hawkins, and Miss Skyring. Stewards: Captain, Mrs. Dryland Haslam; Mrs. Attridge, Miss Bowman, Miss Cooper, Mrs. Edmondson, Miss Olive N. Franklin, Miss Gilford, Miss Harding, Miss Mary Hayward, Miss Jessie Haslam, Miss Harrison Jones, Miss M. Macdonald, Miss Nell, Miss Packer, Miss Smith, Miss Lockley Smith, Miss Stevens, and Miss Rosemond Wallis.

The objects of the union, as set out in the four days' programme, are: To assist parents of all classes to understand the best principles and methods of education in all its aspects, and especially in those which concern the formation of habits and character; to create a better public opinion on the subject of the training of children, and with this object in view to collect and make known the best information and experience on the subject; to afford to parents opportunities for co-operation and consultation, so that the wisdom and experience of each may be profitable to all; to stimulate their enthusiasm, through the sympathy of numbers acting together; to secure greater unity and continuity of education by harmonising home and school training. Some 250 delegates to the conference were received on the lawn on the opening day by Principal and Mrs. Childs. Principal Childs, as president for the year of the local branch, publicly welcomed the delegates to Reading. Public opinion in Reading was very high in regard to the tuition. The Reading branch was in a flourishing condition; but that was due to Mr. Dryland Haslam, the hon. secretary—(hear, hear!)—and such share of success had attended the local arrangements for the conference was due to the untiring labours of Mr. and Mrs. Haslam (applause). As representing the university he also extended a hearty welcome to the delegates; and the administration of the college were glad to place at their disposal the whole of the buildings and the halls of residence (Wantage and St. Andrew's), and to do everything to make their visit pleasant (hear, hear). He congratulated the executive of the union upon the extremely interesting programme that had been mapped out, and he was satisfied that the conference would prove one of the most successful in the history of the union (hear, hear). They would have seen by the papers what extraordinary good fortune the college had come into recently. He thought it would be interesting to the delegates to know for themselves the place which for nineteen years had had an eventful history, and a new chapter was about to open in which it would become an independent university (applause). The delegates from far and near, therefore, found the Reading branch in good spirits (applause).

Lady Campbell, of the London Conference Committee, spoke at some length in acknowledgment of the welcome, and of the excellent arrangements made for the entertainment of the delegates.

UNIVERSITY ESSENTIALS.

Subsequently a meeting was held under the auspices of the Co-Educational Public Schools Trust, Ltd., to discuss the co-education of boys and girls up to university age. In the evening there was a musical gathering in the large hall, for the purpose of hearing an address by Principal Childs on "The essentials of a university education."

Mr. G. P. Parkin, L.D., C.M.G. (son of the local vice-president), occupied the chair, and said it seemed to him especially interesting that the conference should be held in Reading. It appeared almost wonderful that almost within the shadow of the university of Oxford and London, Reading should, as it were, dare to raise its head and further assert itself as a great educational centre. He believed that Reading was the first centre in an agricultural

country which had been able to establish an efficient and strong university, and it must therefore, be agreeable for the union to meet there (hear, hear). The system pursued by the P.N.E.U. dealt with the physical and moral, mental, and spiritual nature of children, and they sought to convince parents of that fact. As a teacher of thirty years' experience he maintained that the success which attended teachers' work depended very largely upon home influences. No school could do anything to raise boys or girls higher than the level of their homes; and therefore the union sought to influence the lives of all who came within the scope of its operations.

Principal Childs went at much length into what he considered were the real essentials to the success of a university. In order to fulfil its purpose such a place should be not merely a library of books, with able professors and sympathetic teachers, but a centre of community of interests of comradeship, and of the moulding of character, so as to enable men and women to take their places in the ranks of life. When he came to Reading eighteen years ago there was but one serious student in the faculty of arts: now there were 150; and that fact served to show that the improvement in secondary education since the Act of 1902, there had grown up an increasing demand for university education, with its capacity for development in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual qualities of students. Universities in England received 25 per cent. of their income from the State, and if the State interfered with the freedom under which they pursued the end for which they existed, then their essential character was destroyed. Very much depended for success on the atmosphere and general environment of a university, much also depended upon the staff. A university encouraged in a university; and in that respect the halls of residence (St. Andrew's and Wantage) connected with Reading University College were accomplishing great work apart from the classrooms.

SECOND DAY.

On the second day four "sessions" had been arranged. In the forenoon, with Mr. W. O. C. M.D., F.R.C.S., of the Medical College, Oxford, in the chair, Dr. W. H. Harris lectured on "How to safeguard the nervous system later with the Rev. W. C. Eppstein, D.D. (headmaster of Reading School), presiding. Mrs. Hickson (principal of Oldfield School, Swanage), read a paper "The value of mathematics in the formation of character." Miss Lucy Ashcroft, M.A., lecturer in mathematics, University College, Reading, following with one of "The study of literature in education." In the afternoon the Mayor of Reading (Mr. J. W. Martin) occupied the chair, while Mr. E. Johnson (South Kensington Art Institute) dealt with "The teaching of writing as penmanship." The next gathering was under the presidency of Mr. W. A. Mount, M.A., and Mrs. Allen, who read a paper on "The land of make-believe." This was followed by a reception at the Reading High School for Girls, Kendrick subject of the invitation of the council, and Miss H. E. Munson. The day's full programme closed with an illustrated lecture by Mr. Walter Parratt, M.A., Doc., being in the chair.

BISHOP OF OXFORD'S VIEWS

On Wednesday, Mr. W. W. Vaughan, the master of Wellington College, with Mr. F. A. G. Colburn in the chair, read a paper on "Our distractions," and with the Archbishop of Berke presiding, Mrs. Philip discussed on "Authority and Independence."

Mr. W. W. Vaughan, of the West-Moore School of Nature Study and its kind, about thirty years ago, I began to suffer much with pain in the back. The pains often spread to the sides and legs.

"I also had bad attacks of dizziness and palpitation, and there were urinary disorders as well from various things, but I had not met with anything from the back."

"Then I read of a case similar to mine being cured by Doan's backache kidney pills, and I came to the conclusion that kidney weakness was the cause of my trouble. The pills gave me great benefit."

"The backache, headache, and palpitation left me, and I have been well all round. My opinion of this remedy is a very high one. I shall certainly recommend it to all others." (Signed) Mrs. E. H. Hinchin.

and deeds, acted as preachers of the gospel (hear, hear).

The Bishop of Oxford, in a long address, dealt with the subjects under four headings:—The nature of happiness, courage, strength, and his lordship elaborated each in impressive manner, showing how each quality should be developed and practised in the training of children.

With Principal Childs in the chair, the Hon. Mrs. Franklin brought the conference to a successful close with a beautiful address, as being followed by several other University authorities and his members of the Reading branch and their representatives of the union.

TEMPERANCE CHORAL SOCIETY.

IMPORTANT SUCCESSES.

The above society paid its annual visit to the Crystal Palace on Saturday, to take part in the twenty-second lists of the National Temperance Choral Union. The members in this large choral society, 5,000 voices on the Handel orchestra, and as their custom, competed in the choral contest which they won a year ago. Eighty-nine singers journeyed to the Palace and were again successful in being placed first, thus retaining for another year the challenge shield which they won a year ago. The two pieces were "The Sea Shell" (Coleridge Taylor), and "The Bard" (Clarke-Woodfield), both unaccompanied, and the adjudicator, Mr. R. R. Terry, first, the Portmouth choir were superior in volume to those of the Reading choir, yet the artistic excellence of the latter gained for them chief honours. Among the eminent musicians who have on various occasions assessed the merits of the temperance choir have been Sir Joseph Barnby, Dr. Frederick Bridge, Sir Walter Parratt, Drs. Pearson, Turpin, Borland, McNaught, Fanning, Terry, Messrs. Coleridge, Taylor, Munro Davidson, and Dr. D. C. C. The choir, which has been in place first eight times, second six times and third seven times. We heartily congratulate Mr. A. W. Moss, F.R.C.M., who has been chosen conductor since the formation of the choir, on this his most recent success. Three members of the society, who are also pupils of Mr. Moss, were successful in the solo singing contests. Messrs. Gled and Foster were placed third and fourth respectively, with laudable mention in the tenor solo contest (longest entries), and Miss Kate Woodley had the honour of being placed first out of twenty-one soloists from various parts of England and Wales, and is to be congratulated on her exceptional success. In 1909 Mr. Moss adjudicated in a similar competition, and placed Miss Winifred Cooper, of Portsmouth, first in the soprano solo. In February, 1909, the choir won a free open scholarship at the Royal College of Music was awarded her. It must be very gratifying to Mr. Moss to have his high praise confirmed. As we recently announced, Mr. Moss has been appointed conductor of the adult choir of 5,000 voices, for next year's date at the Crystal Palace.

POSITIVE READING WITNESS

A Reading witness, who gave her evidence years ago, now addresses it in a most positive way, adding, "consequently."

Mrs. E. Hinchin, of 11, Cardiff Road, Reading, says—Soon after the birth of my child, about thirty years ago, I began to suffer much with pain in the back. The pains often spread to the sides and legs.

"I also had bad attacks of dizziness and palpitation, and there were urinary disorders as well from various things, but I had not met with anything from the back."

"Then I read of a case similar to mine being cured by Doan's backache kidney pills, and I came to the conclusion that kidney weakness was the cause of my trouble. The pills gave me great benefit."

"The backache, headache, and palpitation left me, and I have been well all round. My opinion of this remedy is a very high one. I shall certainly recommend it to all others." (Signed) Mrs. E. H. Hinchin.

OVER THREE YEARS LATER, Mrs. Hinchin adds—"I believe I owe my present health to Doan's pills. For I have had no return of kidney complaint since I first took them. I have every day taken Doan's pills, and should certainly not stop again if any of the old symptoms returned."

Price 2/3 a box, 6 boxes 13/6, of all druggists, or from Foster-McClellan Co., 61, Wells Street, Oxford Street, London, W. Doan's Backache Kidney Pills, sold exclusively for Doan's backache kidney pills, the same as Mrs. Hinchin had.

Col
L
1900
als

Use
Russie
N

N
90
Rep

Hund
Ford,
and of
innun

Sir C
"Ac

Mrs.
"I
wh
For

SAMPL
Hirt
Fordin

For
Broac

Eate

For

Broac

Eate

Eate

17

Sm

SOT
TH
TH

MA
mat

LOCAL

"Re
"Cu
"Cat
"C

FEAR

Te

MISS CHARLOTTE MASON ON KNOWLEDGE.

If knowledge cannot be made to be, "What is known by I?" We can only give a negative answer. Knowledge is not instruction, information, indoctrination, or well-stored memory. It is, rather, like the light of a torch, from mind to mind, and the flame can be kindled at original source only. Therefore, to know, breeds thought; it is an vital thought that reminds that our ideas are created, and out of our human consciousness of life. The case for reason hardly needs demonstration; but one can begin to see the value of reason.

The disciples of Kant founded a league of virtue to arouse Prussian students to the duty of patriotism: They knew how to make a trumpet call; the nation became a nation of students, and the son of Queen Louise established the German Empire! The Danes, too, as we all know, were not without their share of illiteracy to the same Napoleonic impulse. After we had won their battlefields, they were dipping the claws of Bonaparte, they set to work to make themselves the first leaders of Europe, they were the first to put the sword and the bayonet to their education schools, they first set up technical instruction and a pretty wide range in history and literature. To us we are watching with curious interest the same and

Ambleside, January. CHARLOTTE M. MANGOS

HOW FAR IS IT A SUITABLE GAME :

never injury to health from no more. The teacher of the virtues as unselfishness, *esprit de corps*, self-control, equality to the victor, temper, but these qualities can be gained only by the use of the game. The teacher of the virtues of games less violent than hockey, such as football, basketball, tennis, baseball, and golf, is not so much a teacher of the virtues named, though she does play hockey well. The teacher of the virtues of games less violent than hockey, such as football, basketball, tennis, baseball, and golf, is not so much a teacher of the virtues named, though she does play hockey well. The teacher of the virtues of games less violent than hockey, such as football, basketball, tennis, baseball, and golf, is not so much a teacher of the virtues named, though she does play hockey well.

[illegible]

THE BASIS OF NATIONAL STRENGTH.

II.

LETTERS, KNOWLEDGE, AND VIRTUE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I will thank you for your courtesy if you will allow me to discuss a few points suggested in your various correspondence by my letter published in the *Supplement* of February 6. Here is one—I quote the passage without permission because I cannot decipher the name of the writer, who dates from an hotel:—

There is one thing, however, one note of regret, and that is that one paragraph, that on classical education, was not more expanded. I am satisfied that your central view covers the whole truth, and I am going to give you a small individual experience illustrating this fact—viz., that an early education in the great books of our own language, read, with enjoyment, by children and appropriately given to them from year to year, is the true groundwork of later expansion. Here is the story: My three daughters were suckled on Walter Scott and Shakespeare. Later, about the ages of from ten to twelve, off their own, they took up Plutarch's Lives, Bunsen, Deles, and in the same period they refused to learn arithmetic and geography, the former on the ground of its monotony and the latter because, although they loved it, they held that the existing system of teaching geography was "rotten," and that geography ought to be learnt by going to the places. I knew better than to remonstrate. I meekly suggested that they should substitute something else in their curriculum, and they said at once, in an obviously prepared sentence, "That's just it, we want to learn Latin and history." Now here comes your point (in that lamentably abbreviated paragraph):—

Given boys (or girls) who have read and thought and who have obtained the habit of almost perfect attention that the necessary amount of work in the classics may be done in a much shorter time, and the mind of the pupil is the more alert because it is engaged in handling various subjects.

Six months later these girls knew more Latin than I learnt in six years under distinguished scholars with very eminent names. They could sing passages from Horace appropriately; they knew the two first *Edgemoor* and half the *David* by heart; they regarded Cicero's letters to Atticus as a "penny post" affair, and were quite unduly familiar with the private life of Seneca. But all this did not interfere with their painting or their horsemanship, and better authorities on cricket and the Turf I don't happen to know. That is the illustrative episode. The point, in my mind, is that an early education from great books with the large ideas and the large virtues is the only true foundation of knowledge—the knowledge worth having.

This interesting letter brings us straight to a question which I thought had been pretty fully threshed out; and I take it up with diffidence, only because no outsider may see the aspects of the question overlooked by experts. The gist of the charges brought against public schools—Classics take up so much time that there is no opportunity for *Liberal* *Humanities* in any other form. It is easy to say—Gainsbury by giving up Greek; but, in the first place, public schools, with our old Universities in sequence, are our educational achievement. Other efforts are experimental, but this one thing we know—that men are turned out from this course who are practically unmatched for quality, culture, and power. The average B.A. shows up better than his compatriots, and a degree in arts signifies more than one in any other faculty.

We return thus to my original contention—that letters, primarily, are the content of knowledge; that if Wellington ever said how Waterloo was won, it was not on the playing-field only, but in the classrooms; that Caesar, Theophrastus, *Prometheus Bound*, have won more laurels than we know on fields of battle and military. A little strong meat goes a long way, and even the average public school boy turns out a capable man. But, also, if capable he is also ignorant; he does not know the history and literature of his own country or of any other. He has not realized that knowledge is not a store, but rather a state that a person remains within or drops out of. His degree taken, he shuts his books, reads the newspapers a little, perhaps a magazine or two, but otherwise occupies himself with the interests of sport, games, shows, or his employment. What is to be done, we wonder vaguely, to secure to this average boy some tincture of knowledge and some taste for knowledge. The expedient of dropping Greek to make room for other things recurs; but on reflection we say "No," for known and everything has been perfectly said these two thousand years ago and more.

This knowledge, slowly drummed into a youth, should keep him from swollen head, from joining in the "We are the people" cry of the blatant patriot; and there is no better way of knowing a people than to know something of their own words in their own speech. It is well by the way that we should remember that we have as a nation an enormous loss to make good; time was not so long ago, when rich and poor were intimately familiar with one of the three great classical literatures. Men's thoughts were coloured, their speech moulded, their conduct more or less governed by the national idiom called "Grecian." The impassioned rhetoric of Paul—all writings, like the rest of the Bible, in what Matthew would call the general manner. Here is the best of English unrefined from which men have drawn the best of their literature holds, as well as the deepest of their life, their philosophy of history, and that prime knowledge which we are practising to do without—the knowledge of God. And we wonder that the governing classes should forget how to rule as those who serve; and that the young man, brought up on "Readers" in lieu of a great literature, should act with the obstinate recklessness proper to ignorance.

But to return to the main issue. How shall we instruct the ignorance and yet retain the classical culture of the average public school boy? I should like to suggest, again, with diffidence, that he, like his more brilliant compeer, is driven through a mill the outpour of which should be scholarship. Now, scholarship is an exquisite distinction which it would be ill for us as a nation to miss, but if all the men in an assemblage were decorated, who would wear an order? Some things are precious for their rarity, and the Garter when he gave up the right to it is as absurd as the knighthood of the little boy who must be a Knight of the Garter when he grew up. The thing is not to be done; some men are born to be scholars, as the shape of their heads testifies. The rest of us take pleasure in their decoration, but are not serious for scholarship is not the best thing, and does not necessarily imply that vital touch of mind upon mind out of which is got knowledge. As for erudi-

tion, we may leave that out of count, it is hardly even an aim at the present time. The gentleman, as one so thousands, say, or our best, do not trouble themselves much about the regimen we offer—classics or modern languages, or what not; an idle tale, a puppet show, the meanest flower that blows, is enough for them. Anyway, they take care of themselves, and we come back to the average boy.

He must learn his Greek and Latin, but there is an easier way; the girls mentioned in the letter I cite had learnt and wrote Greek with "remarkable purity" at twelve, having, so to speak, done with Latin at an earlier age; and we may be sure, had not been through the greater school grind. Nor had any of the learned ladies of the Italian and the French Renaissance, the list of whose accomplishments leaves us breathless. While still children, we know how early they married, their knowledge of the classics was copious (and not too wholesome), they knew two or three modern languages, could treat the wounded, nurse the sick, prepare simples, govern great households, rule to chase, yes, and kill too; and do exquisite embroidery. Our own women of the Tudor times appear likewise to have been "infinitely informed" and to have carried their learning gaily; Maria Theresia, by no means a learned lady, could make speeches and converse with her Magyar nobles in Latin, and they could respond, neither knowing the native speech of the other. If these things were true of girls and women, how much more was expected of boys and men?

Are we persons of less intelligence, or how did they do it all? Every preparatory school knows how. Perhaps new boys enter public schools who could not pass "Hesperians," that is, who are not, as far as Greek goes, ready for Oxford. I once heard a headmaster say:—

A boy does as much Latin now by the age of twelve as he will ever need for examination purposes, and he spends the next eight years in doing over again and again the same work. . . . I am sure that he climbed at twelve he is still climbing at twenty. A clever boy of twelve could easily pass Hesperians.

A headmaster in Newfoundland mentions in his school report for 1903 a boy who "begins Greek in October and passed the Oxford Responsions in January."

There is a leakage somewhere, and there is overlapping, and both are due to the examinations upon which schools and ships are awarded. Something must be done, because public schools, with all their splendid records, are not effective in the sense that they turn out the average boy, a good all-round man. For better or for worse, who knows? The Democracy is coming in like a flood, and our old foundations will be tossed about in the swelter unless we make haste to strengthen our weak places. Might not a Commission—consisting of two or three headmasters, as many preparatory school masters, University "Dons," and public men (once public school boys and now the fathers of the boys)—be appointed by consent to look into the question and devise examination tests which shall safeguard letters, ancient and modern, without putting too high a premium upon scholarship?

Once the hands of schoolmasters were untied, they would no doubt devise means by which our friend, the average boy, would get such a knowledge of the classics as should open life-long resources to him. Like the Baron of Bradwardine he would go about with a pocket *Lexicon* ("Titus Livius") to be read, not laboured at, in a few lines at a time. The *Serenus of Thebes*, *Epigonia in Adria*, the few tragedies left to us by the great dramatists would form part of the familiar background of his thoughts. He would know the gist of what the writers in Greek and Latin, whether through printed translations or through the text itself rendered in the sort of running translation which some of us have how to give. *Puri* would take his share of grand Greek, and construe the two or three books of his present limited acquaintance. That his limitations are only what he recognizes, and he would not be required to turn out Greek and Latin verses.

Meanwhile his master will require him to know pretty intimately a hundred worthy books in addition to the great novels—to be read in class periods, in the intervals of leisure time—his knowledge of such to be tested by a single bit of oral description or written work in verse or prose. Ground in Grammar, Latin, and Greek, every school-boy's record as it did that of the dead "Grammarian"; but the ten or twelve years of school life should yield more than this.

I say nothing now about the teaching of science, for which most schools provide. I may be allowed to consider the subject in a future letter, but should like to say, meantime, that for our generation, science seems to me to be the way of intellectual advance. All the same, the necessarily incumbent upon us at the moment is to inculcate a knowledge of *Letters*. Men and their motives, the historical sequence of events, principles for the conduct of life, in fact, practical philosophy, is what the emergencies of the times require us to possess, and to be able to communicate. These things are not to be arrived at by any short cut of economies, expedients, and the like, but are the gathered harvests of many seasons' sowing of poetry, literature, history. The nation is in sore need of wit, men, and three must be made out of a hundred boys.

I am Sir, very truly yours,

Ambleside, March.

CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

THE PARENTS' UNION SCHOOL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Possibly many of those who read Miss Charlotte Mason's interesting article on "The Basis of National Strength" in your last issue of the *Educational Supplement* may have thought that the methods and principles for which she pleaded were excellent in theory but hardly attainable in practice. It may therefore be of interest to your readers to know that at a gathering which will be held at Winchester on May 28, and which will be the coming-of-age of the Parents' Union School (1891-1912) opportunity will be given for seeing the methods of teaching in practice and for testing some of the results in the exhibits of handicraft, examination papers, &c., which will be on view.

This correspondence school has at the present moment 1,200 children on its register, one half of the number working in their own homes in the British Isles and in the British Dominions beyond the seas, and the other half in schools which adopt the programme of work and submit to terminal examinations conducted by Miss Mason. We hope that about 200 of those pupils will be able to attend the gathering, where they will have lessons from ex-students of the House of Education, and gain a little idea of the corporate whole of the school. I shall be glad to follow some of the programme to any one interested in it; it includes folk-song, music, dancing, visits to the Cathedral and other places of interest, nature study, and a historical drama, part of which is a demonstration lesson in Plutarch's "Lives." Citizenship, English, French history, philosophy, elementary and advanced arithmetic, &c.

H. FRANKLIN, Hon. Corresponding Secretary, Parents' National Educational Union, 7, Victoria Street, S.W.

